



---

*Plenary sitting*

---

**A9-0196/2023**

25.5.2023

**\*\*\***

## **RECOMMENDATION**

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)  
(12787/2022 – C9-0001/2023 – 2022/0249(NLE))

Committee on Fisheries

Rapporteur: François-Xavier Bellamy

***Symbols for procedures***

- \* Consultation procedure
- \*\*\* Consent procedure
- \*\*\*I Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
- \*\*\*II Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
- \*\*\*III Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION .....	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	6
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT .....	9
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS .....	13
PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE .....	17
FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE .....	18



## DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

**on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)  
(12787/2022 – C9-0001/2023 – 2022/0249(NLE))**

**(Consent)**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the draft Council decision (12787/2022),
  - having regard to the Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026) (12785/2022),
  - having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 43 and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a) (v), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C9-0001/2023),
  - having regard to Rule 105(1) and (4), and Rule 114(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Development,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Budgets,
  - having regard to the recommendation of the Committee on Fisheries (A9-0196/2023),
1. Gives its consent to the conclusion of the Protocol;
  2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Republic of Mauritius.

## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

### **Background**

According to 2020 statistics, the EU fleet caught 217 000 tonnes of fish in the western Indian Ocean, which is the main tuna fishing ground for the EU (mostly yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye tuna). 69 % of the catch was taken by Spain, 28 % by France, 2 % by Italy and 1 % by Portugal. According to IOTC data for 2019, the top three fleets (in terms of catches by weight) are Indonesia (19.8%), Iran (13.3 %) and the EU(12.5 %). EU fishing vessels operating in La Réunion represented less than 2% of all catches in the waters of Mauritius.

According to the government of Mauritius the fisheries sector employs 22 000 people, working directly and indirectly, with approximately 2 000 artisanal fishers and around 4 000 operating in the fish processing sector.

The Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) signed by the European Union and Mauritius on 21 December 2013 expired on 7 December 2021. Due to the COVID pandemic both parties agree on an extension by an additional six months in July 2022 while the new protocol was being negotiated.

The Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Mauritius allows the EU fleet to fish in the waters of Mauritius for tuna and tuna-like species, for annual fishing opportunities of 5 500 tonnes for 40 tuna seiners, 45 surface long liners and a number of authorised Union supply vessels established by relevant IOTC resolutions. This agreement is important for the EU tuna fleet in the Indian Ocean and allows to strengthen the relationship between EU and Mauritius.

The new protocol foresees a total financial contribution of EUR 2 900 000. That total financial contribution shall comprise an annual amount for access to Mauritius waters of EUR 275 000, a specific amount of EUR 275 000 per year for the support and implementation of Mauritius's sectoral fisheries policy and an additional amount of EUR 175 000 per year to support the development of maritime policy and the blue economy in line with the objectives set out in Article 7(2) of this Protocol. In addition, a financial contribution shall be paid by shipowners as per the provisions of the Annex.

### **Position of the Rapporteur**

The 2017-2021 Protocol under the Fisheries Partnership Agreement concluded between the EU and Mauritius has broadly met the evaluation criteria for EU interventions for effectiveness. It has met the objective of protecting the interests of the EU long distance fleet by providing stable access to an important fishing zone in the Western Indian Ocean. Key stakeholders concerned have found the Protocol to be relevant. The ex post evaluation revealed that in the 2018-2020 period, fishing opportunities were used by an annual average of 44 vessels (27 tuna purse seiners and 18 small-scale surface longliners based in La Réunion). For EU tuna purse seiners, 100% of the EU fleet active in the Indian Ocean used fishing opportunities in the Mauritius waters.

On average, EU tuna vessels caught 71% of the reference tonnage of 4 000 tonnes agreed under the Protocol, which sets the terms of the financial contribution to be paid from the EU budget. EU tuna catches varied between 38% of the reference tonnage in 2020 and 110% in 2019.

So far, total EU payments to Mauritius amounted to about EUR 850 000 per year on average over the first three years of the Protocol, with 55% paid from the EU budget (access and sectoral support) and 45% paid by EU shipowners benefiting from fishing opportunities. Excluding the sectoral support envelope, average access payments per year were EUR 610 000, with EU shipowners benefiting from the fishing opportunities paying 63% of total access costs. On average, total EU payments to Mauritius represented 18% of catch value, which is above the benchmark minimum value of 12% agreed by SWIOFC Member States through the Minimum Terms and Conditions for access to tuna fisheries adopted in 2019.

Landings of the EU purse seine fleet directly support the 4 000 jobs in the cannery, and utilisation of repair and maintenance services further support the 500 jobs at *Chantier Naval de l'Océan Indien*. The Rapporteur recognises that the benefits derived by Mauritius from EU tuna-related activities in the Indian Ocean thus go well beyond the benefits derived by the Protocol itself.

The Mauritian cannery industry processes, annually, around 50 000 tonnes of tuna caught by the EU fleet in all the Indian Ocean, much more than the average of 3 500 tonnes caught annually in the Mauritian waters. 67% of jobs in this industry are held by women.

The Rapporteur believes that the agreement also enables the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius to continue working more closely together on promoting sound exploitation of fishery resources in Mauritius waters and to support Mauritius to develop its fisheries sector, in the interests of both parties. It also facilitates the continuous cooperation with Mauritius as a strategic partner for alliance building and EU positioning in the region and in particular at the IOTC.

The Rapporteur emphasizes even more the importance of this agreement for the EU Outermost regions, namely Reunion Island and Mayotte. Delayed renewal of FPAs is extremely damaging for small scale fleets in these regions whose fishing zones are limited.

For the next negotiation of this agreement and any similar agreement, such as the one with Madagascar, the Rapporteur calls for a transitional tonnage threshold below which fishing activities can still be allowed during the negotiation period and until the adoption of the agreement.

In terms of added value the EU intervention strengthened Mauritius' capacity to comply with certain relevant IOTC resolutions, and contributed to the acquisition of around fifty small-scale vessels by artisanal fishers for fishing outside of lagoons. The sectoral support programme was also successful in enhancing Mauritius' research capacities on aquaculture.

The Rapporteur highlights the contradiction in the EU policy on the renewal of the fishing fleets in the Outermost regions: protocol grants dedicated to the sectoral support activities contributed to the acquisition of new fishing vessels for Mauritian fishers, thus providing financial support for the development of non-European fleets, in line with other partnership

agreements with multiple third countries. But at the same time, the European Commission prevents any financial support to be attributed to the renewal of the fleet in European outermost regions: it prohibits state aid for boat replacements; and in contradiction even to the provisions of the EMFAF, no European subsidies have been attributed in this objective, in any region. Be it because of lack of information provided by Member states, or of undue demands from the European Commission, this situation is unacceptable, and even more in the light of this inconsistency making non-European fishing fleets more eligible to European support than European fleets.

In view of the strategic importance of the FPA with Mauritius for the EU fishing fleet operating in the Indian Ocean and in order to ensure the continuation of operations the Rapporteur recommends that Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of this protocol.



## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT**

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)

(2022/12787 – C9-0001-2023 – 2022/0249(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Stéphane Bijoux

The Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius was signed on 21 December 2012 and entered into force in January 2014 for a tacitly renewable period of six years. The latest protocol on the implementation of the SFPA covered a period of four years and expired on 7 December 2021. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was extended by six months.

On the basis of the relevant negotiating directives, the Commission conducted negotiations with the Mauritian Government with a view to concluding a new protocol, which was initialled on 7 May 2022.

The main aim of the new protocol is to provide an updated framework that takes into account the priorities of the new common fisheries policy and its external dimension, so as to develop a sustainable policy and ensure a sound exploitation of fishery resources in Mauritian waters, whilst also strengthening the strategic partnership between the European Union and Mauritius.

The new protocol provides fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Mauritian waters in accordance with the available scientific advice and the recommendations made by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, within the limits of the available surplus. The new EU-Mauritius protocol allows EU vessels to fish a total of 5 500 tonnes of tuna species per year in Mauritian waters and provides for the fishing opportunities of 40 tuna seiners and 45 surface longliners.

The annual financial contribution allocated to the protocol by the EU amounts to EUR 725 000. This total amount is broken down into EUR 275 000 for access to fishery resources, EUR 275 000 for support to and implementation of Mauritius's sectoral fisheries policy, and EUR 175 000 to support the development of maritime policy and the blue economy. Compared to the contribution allocated to the previous protocol, this represents an increase in terms of both access and sectoral support. The SFPA and the protocol will continue to contribute towards improving the management and conservation of fishery resources by enabling the Mauritian Government to implement a sectoral support programme at national level which will support small-scale fishers and the development of a semi-industrial segment. Interventions to be funded under the sectoral component have been discussed and

agreed by both parties within the Joint Committee, which was set up to monitor the application of both the SFPA and its protocol.

Fishing is at the heart of the Mauritian economy, both as a source of foreign income and employment. More importantly, artisanal fishing ensures food security on the island. The Mauritian fishing industry – which has been affected by the aftermaths of the Wakashio oil spill in July 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, and is battling the impacts of climate change on the coastal and marine ecosystem, as well as those of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing – is in need of structural investment so that it can cope with an increasing number of new challenges. This sector has the potential to create innovative pathways for a resilient and sustainable economy, benefiting the industry as well as small-scale fishers. An evaluation of the previous protocol brought to the fore that strengthening Mauritius' capacity to comply with its international obligations – in particular those related to monitoring, catch sampling and port inspections – should be the priority. The implementation of electronic logbooks was a major step towards traceability in this regard, but further technical assistance is needed to ensure that more progress is being made towards the development of a sustainable and resilient sector, and to provide Mauritian fishers with new opportunities.

Your rapporteur takes the view that the protocol has the potential to promote the responsible and sustainable exploitation of fishery resources as well as the development of the national fisheries and maritime policy in Mauritius, which is in the interests of both parties. For this reason, your rapporteur proposes that the protocol be approved.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to recommend approval of the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026).

## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Title</b>	Draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol implementing the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)
<b>References</b>	12787/2022 – C9-0001/2023 – 2022/0249(NLE)
<b>Committee responsible:</b>	PECH
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	DEVE 30.3.2023
<b>Rapporteur</b> Date appointed	Stéphane Bijoux 30.3.2023
<b>Date adopted</b>	26.4.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 18 –: 1 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Eric Andrieu, Hildegard Bentele, Dominique Bilde, Udo Bullmann, Mónica Silvana González, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Beata Kempa, Karsten Lucke, Erik Marquardt, Michèle Rivasi, Eleni Stavrou, Tomas Tobé
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Malte Gallée, Ádám Kósa, Iskra Mihaylova, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Carlos Zorrinho

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

18	+
ECR	Beata Kempa
NI	Adam Kósa
PPE	Hildegard Bentele, György Hölvényi, Rasa Juknevičienė, Eleni Stavrou, Tomas Tobé
Renew	Barry Andrews, Iskra Mihaylova, Jan-Christoph Oetjen
S&D	Eric Andrieu, Udo Bullmann, Mónica Silvana González, Karsten Lucke, Carlos Zorrinho
Verts/ALE	Malte Gallée, Erik Marquardt, Michèle Rivasi

1	-
ID	Dominique Bilde

0	0

Key:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstentions

29.3.2023

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS**

for the Committee on Fisheries

on the proposal for a Council decision on the Conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)  
(COM(2022)0423 – C9-0001/2023 – 2022/0249(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Francisco Guerreiro

### **SHORT JUSTIFICATION**

The Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Mauritius was signed on 21 December 2012 and entered into force on 28 January 2014 for a period of 6 years. Unless terminated by one of the parties, it is tacitly renewed for additional periods of 3 years and is therefore still in force.

A six-month extension of the existing Protocol on the implementation of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement was agreed in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and Mauritius, and was signed on 5 April 2022.

In the meantime and on the basis of the relevant negotiating directives<sup>1</sup>, the Commission conducted negotiations with Mauritius on concluding a new Protocol. The new Protocol was initialled on 7 May 2022. It covers a period of 4 years from the date of provisional application laid down in Article 18 of the Protocol – the date on which it is signed by both parties.

The main aim of the new Protocol is to provide an updated framework that takes into account the priorities of the reformed common fisheries policy and its external dimension. This includes promoting a sustainable fisheries policy, in line with the objective of conserving marine biological resources recognised in EU law, a sound exploitation of fishery resources in Mauritian waters, and Mauritius' efforts to develop its sustainable ocean economy, in the interests of both parties. This cooperation will also help promote decent working conditions in the fisheries sector.

The new Protocol provides fishing opportunities for EU vessels in Mauritian waters. This is based on the best available scientific advice, the recommendations made by the regional fisheries organisation that manages highly migratory fish stocks, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the results of an evaluation of the previous Protocol (2017-2021).

---

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the 3813th meeting of the Competitiveness Council (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space) on 28.09.2021.

The Protocol provides for the following fishing opportunities:

- 40 tuna seiners;
- 45 surface longliners.

The annual financial contribution is EUR 725 000, based on:

- (a) a reference tonnage of 5 500 tonnes, for which an annual amount linked to access has been set at EUR 275 000;
- (b) support for developing Mauritius' sectoral fisheries policy, amounting to EUR 275 000 per year; and
- (c) support for developing the maritime policy and blue economy, amounting to EUR 175 000 per year.

This support meets the objectives of cooperation in the field of ocean economy, aquaculture, sustainable development of the oceans, maritime spatial planning, marine energy and marine environment, and development of the maritime policy and blue economy.

The annual amount for commitment and payment appropriations is established during the annual budgetary procedure, including for the reserve line for protocols not yet having entered into force at the beginning of the year<sup>2</sup>. For recollection, with DEC23/2022, the budgetary authority already approved a transfer of EUR 725 000 from the reserve line to the operational line 08 05 01 to honour the 2022 financial obligations stemming from the signing of the Protocol.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to recommend approval of the proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026).

---

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the Interinstitutional Agreement on cooperation in budgetary matters, point 20 (OJ L 433I, 22.12.2020).

## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Title</b>	Conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)
<b>References</b>	12787/2022 – C9-0001/2023 – 2022/0249(NLE)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	PECH
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	BUDG 16.1.2023
<b>Rapporteur for the opinion</b> Date appointed	Francisco Guerreiro 16.11.2022
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	2.3.2023
<b>Date adopted</b>	28.3.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 31 –: 2 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Rasmus Andresen, Pietro Bartolo, Andor Deli, Pascal Durand, José Manuel Fernandes, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Vlad Gheorghe, Valérie Hayer, Niclas Herbst, Adam Jarubas, Fabienne Keller, Joachim Kuhs, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Pierre Larrourou, Camilla Laureti, Janusz Lewandowski, Margarida Marques, Siegfried Mureşan, Victor Negrescu, Andrey Novakov, Dimitrios Papadimoulis, Karlo Ressler, Bogdan Rzońca, Eleni Stavrou, Nils Torvalds, Nils Ušakovs, Angelika Winzig
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Francisco Guerreiro, Monika Vana
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Daniel Caspary, Daniel Freund, Isabel García Muñoz, Andreas Glück

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

31	+
NI	Andor Deli
PPE	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Daniel Caspary, José Manuel Fernandes, Niclas Herbst, Adam Jarubas, Janusz Lewandowski, Siegfried Mureşan, Andrey Novakov, Karlo Ressler, Eleni Stavrou, Angelika Winzig
Renew	Vlad Gheorghe, Andreas Glück, Valérie Hayer, Fabienne Keller, Nils Torvalds
S&D	Pietro Bartolo, Pascal Durand, Isabel García Muñoz, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Pierre Larrourou, Camilla Laureti, Margarida Marques, Victor Negrescu, Nils Ušakovs
The Left	Dimitrios Papadimoulis
Verts/ALE	Rasmus Andresen, Daniel Freund, Francisco Guerreiro, Monika Vana

2	-
ECR	Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Bogdan Rzońca

1	0
ID	Joachim Kuhs

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention



## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Title</b>	Conclusion of a Protocol implementing the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius (2022-2026)	
<b>References</b>	12787/2022 – C9-0001/2023 – 2022/0249(NLE)	
<b>Date of consultation or request for consent</b>	22.12.2022	
<b>Committee responsible</b> Date announced in plenary	PECH 16.1.2023	
<b>Committees asked for opinions</b> Date announced in plenary	DEVE 30.3.2023	BUDG 16.1.2023
<b>Rapporteurs</b> Date appointed	François-Xavier Bellamy 2.2.2023	
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	6.2.2023	28.3.2023
<b>Date adopted</b>	24.5.2023	
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 26 - : 0 0 : 1	
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Clara Aguilera, João Albuquerque, Pietro Bartolo, François-Xavier Bellamy, Isabel Carvalhais, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Asger Christensen, Rosa D'Amato, Francisco Guerreiro, Niclas Herbst, Jan Huitema, France Jamet, Predrag Fred Matic, Caroline Roose, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Marc Tarabella	
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Martin Hlaváček, Ska Keller, Gabriel Mato, Raffaele Stancanelli, Lucia Vuolo	
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Pablo Arias Echeverría, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Marco Campomenosi, Clare Daly, Gilles Lebreton, Mick Wallace	
<b>Date tabled</b>	25.5.2023	

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

26	+
ECR	Bert-Jan Ruissen, Raffaele Stancanelli
ID	Marco Campomenosi, Gilles Lebreton
NI	Marc Tarabella
PPE	Pablo Arias Echeverría, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, François-Xavier Bellamy, Maria da Graça Carvalho, Niclas Herbst, Gabriel Mato, Lucia Vuolo
Renew	Asger Christensen, Martin Hlaváček, Jan Huitema
S&D	Clara Aguilera, João Albuquerque, Pietro Bartolo, Isabel Carvalhais, Predrag Fred Matić
The Left	Clare Daly, Mick Wallace
Verts/ALE	Rosa D'Amato, Francisco Guerreiro, Ska Keller, Caroline Roose

0	-

1	0
ID	France Jamet

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention